



**Media Advisory**  
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### **Call For Small Businesses to Boycott Real Estate Lobby's Cornegy and Brewer Roundtable**

**Dateline: New York City July 13th, 2015** Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and City Councilman Robert Cornegy are holding small business roundtables promoting the real estate lobby's proposal to maintain the status quo of small businesses being forced out due to exorbitant rent increases. According to CM Cornegy, "numerous small and locally-owned businesses that many would describe as New York City institutions were forced to close or relocate as a result of exorbitant rent increases sought by landlords during the lease renewal process... currently no legal protections for these businesses during the lease renewal process." Cornegy's Landlord Bill is no real solution at all. He proposes to save these businesses by giving them a one year lease extension, at a 15% hike, to find a new location to move when renewal terms can't be reached between the landlord and tenant.

Small business advocates say the Cornegy Landlord Bill is not new nor a real solution but a distraction created by the real estate lobby in the 1980's. Cornegy's decades old real estate proposal was originally called the "Landlord's Bill" because it was written by and for landlords to maintain the status quo of keeping all the rights exclusively in the hands of landlords during the lease renewal process - even if it meant the continued destruction of our city's small businesses.

Some history on the Cornegy/Landlord Bill: In 1985, former Mayor Ed Koch and Speaker Peter Vallone formed the Small Retail Business Study Commission, under the guise of finding a solution to address the increased closings of established businesses caused by sky high rent increases. This hand picked commission's real purpose was to recommend proposals which would keep the power with landlords and maintain the status quo where real estate speculators had hijacked the commercial marketplace and were reaping windfall profits at the expense of local merchants. This biased commission was called the "Limousine Commission" as it was made up of bankers, Wall Street owners, big business, real estate, and political cronies who arrived at meetings in limousines. The main objective was to block the new Arbitration bill introduced by then Council Member Ruth Messinger which gave rights to business owners to negotiate fair lease terms or go before a neutral arbitrator for legally binding arbitration if they could not reach agreement. The Commission's majority recommendation was, word for word, what Cornegy is proposing today: non-binding mediation without legally binding arbitration and a one year extension at 15% increase for you to move.

Unanimously, the city's small business community, along with all progressive legislators rejected this Landlord's Bill 30 years ago. It is unfortunate for today's desperate small business owners struggling to survive in business that Cornegy did not take the time to review the entire report issued by this committee. He would have learned that the only true members of the committee who committed to finding a real solution to stop the closing of small businesses issued a minority report recommending giving the owners rights to lease renewal with arbitration, Ruth Messinger's People's Bill, the original version of today's Small Business Jobs Survival Act. (SBJSA)

According to Sung Soo Kim, NYC's leading advocate and consultant on small business issues, "The Cornegy Bill is not a real solution to save our businesses, it is a Trojan Horse created by the real estate lobby and delivered by Small Business Services, the Speaker's office and elected officials bought and paid for by big real estate through their campaign contributions". Kim continues, "Cornegy's Bill will give one year for a small businesses to move. Is Cornegy unaware of the

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speculation that has been going on for two decades and spread to every street in NYC? The only real solution to save our small businesses is to give business owners rights to renew their leases and rights to negotiate reasonable terms thereby leveling the playing field for our businesses to survive. I ask all council members to sponsor the only real solution, the Small Business Jobs Survival Act.”

This is a sentiment echoed by the NYC small business community, “In this economy, the odds are tough even for big businesses with new locations, and thus nearly impossible for small local businesses. Any politician is completely out of touch if they think a small business, no matter how successful, can just move to a new location and expect to survive,” says Teresa Soroka owner of Ame Ame-Love All Seasons.

Join **TakeBackNYC** in calling for a boycott of Cornegy and Brewer’s Real Estate Lobby Roundtables and this insult to the NYC small business community. For a real solution to stop the closing of established businesses, stop the rent gouging, and stop the illegal extortion of mostly immigrant owners join **TakeBackNYC** for our **Washington Heights Forum, July 22nd at 7pm at the Malcolm X Ballroom located at 3940 Broadway at 165th Street.**

\*\*\* TakeBackNYC is a direct action political lobbying organization representing a coalition of small business owners, residents, and advocacy groups formed with one goal, and one goal only: Empower and protect the rights of NYC small business owners. [www.TakeBackNYC.nyc](http://www.TakeBackNYC.nyc)